



The President's Daily Brief

19 November 1973

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Following the cease-fire, old animosities are flaring up again as Arab leaders prepare to attend or avoid a summit conference to begin on November 26.

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The prisoner-of-war exchange is more than half finished. (Page 1)

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Libya's President Qadhafi is openly campaigning against the six-point accord between Egypt and Israel. (Page 4)

After a day of sporadic demonstrations Athens was quiet overnight. The armed forces remain a key factor in the Greek political scene, and, if the situation should worsen, a return to a military regime cannot be excluded. (Page 6)

Demonstrators have been voicing grievances in the Thai hinterland for the past month and central officials are worried. So far, they intend only to step gingerly and proceed with political reforms. (Page 8)

Representatives of 23 Latin American and Caribbean states have drawn up a broad agenda for a meeting with Secretary Kissinger early next year. (Page 9)

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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Several important leaders may not attend the Arab summit meeting to be held in Algiers on November 26. Acting Jordanian Foreign Minister Mufti claims that the Iraqis and Libyans will not go. He told a US diplomat that he hopes Saudi Arabia's King Faysal also will not attend. In that case, he said, King Husayn could stay home too.

The Iraqi News Agency reported yesterday that 11 of the 18 Arab League member governments have so far agreed to participate in the summit. Libya, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia were not among the 11. The Iraqis and Libyans are opposed to Egypt's agreement to negotiate with Israel. The other prospective absentees probably wish to avoid for now a forum where the issue may come to a head.

King Husayn of Jordan, meanwhile, arrived in Tehran yesterday. According to press reports, he intends to discuss with the Shah the possibility of convening, perhaps early next month, a summit conference of Islamic states.

Over the weekend a Beirut paper reported that Egyptian President Sadat will meet "very soon" with Soviet party chief Brezhnev to discuss matters of "extreme importance." No date or meeting place was given, but Sadat is reported by the Iraqi press to be ready to fly to Belgrade this week for a meeting with Libya's Qadhafi.

Numerous Arab and black African officials arrived in Addis Ababa over the weekend to attend a special session of the Ministerial Council of the Organization of African Unity starting today. The session was called at the urging of the Algerians, primarily to discuss the Middle East crisis and to get the OAU on record as backing the Arab cause.

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The Israeli cabinet yesterday approved Prime Minister Meir's proposal to establish a special five-man judicial commission of inquiry to probe the armed forces' preparedness for and conduct of the war. It is unlikely that the inquiry will be completed before the Israeli general elections scheduled for December 31.

The Egyptian-Israeli prisoner-of-war exchange continued smoothly over the weekend, with over half the prisoners held by each side reportedly having been returned. The evacuation of wounded from Suez city, meanwhile, was completed yesterday, according to a Red Cross spokesman. Egyptian and Israeli negotiators are to meet informally today to discuss, among other things, the disengagement of forces and the re-supply of Suez city, according to a UN spokesman in Cairo.

Egypt, meanwhile, has protested to the UN Israel's efforts to construct a causeway across the Suez Canal at the northern end of the Great Bitter Lake, charging that such activity constitutes a very serious violation of the cease-fire and a major engineering change of the canal.

Yesterday's announcement by the Arab oil producers that the production cutback planned for December will not affect exports to eight of the nine EC countries should at least temporarily reduce public criticism in Europe of the pro-Arab position recently adopted by the EC. The announcement stated that the Arab action was "in appreciation" of the EC's stance on the Middle

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East, as expressed in the statement adopted by the nine EC foreign ministers on November 6. The latest Arab action on oil, however, does not include any changes in the previously announced 25-percent cutback in production or in the total ban on exports to the Netherlands or the US. Thus, while the Europeans can take some satisfaction, the oil squeeze will continue.

The Arab move will have the effect of emphasizing differences between Europe and the US on Middle East issues. These differences could be made even sharper if the exemption gained by the EC encourages it to tilt still more toward the Arabs in hopes of inducing a further relaxation of the restrictions on the flow of Arab oil to Europe.

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LIBYA

President Qadhafi--angered by Cairo's acceptance of the cease-fire and President Sadat's apparent willingness to go to the negotiating table--is now openly campaigning against the six-point accord between Egypt and Israel.

Breaking a long silence in an interview early last week, Qadhafi protested great-power efforts to halt the Arab-Israeli conflict, which he claimed could never be resolved by negotiations. His remarks reflect a deepening rift with Sadat and an unwillingness to cooperate in future peace talks.

Qadhafi's behavior throughout the recent crisis has been determined by his belief that the war was ill-timed, and waged solely for the territorial gains of Egypt and Syria rather than for the complete restoration of historic Palestine to the Arabs. The events of the last six weeks, particularly Egypt's acceptance of the six-point accord, have confirmed Qadhafi's long-held suspicion that Egypt is prepared to accept the boundaries of Israel as they existed before the 1967 war. Such recognition of Israel, however indirect, and the prospect of great-power sponsorship of a settlement are anathema to Qadhafi.

Although at present Qadhafi appears anxious to avoid an open rupture with Egypt, he is working to undermine support for Sadat's position on negotiations. He and other members of the Revolutionary Command Council have been in frequent contact with other Arab leaders with the apparent aim of isolating Sadat before peace talks begin.

Despite Qadhafi's lack of credibility in most Arab capitals, he may be receiving a hearing from many of those who have long regarded Egypt as a too powerful and self-interested neighbor and from those radical elements in all Arab countries who share Libya's goal of ejecting all "European" Jews from Palestine. Even among Arab moderates, Libya's appeals may well play on traditional fears of Egyptian hegemony, especially now that Cairo has renewed its indebtedness to Moscow. The Libyans may also amplify Syrian and Palestinian misgivings that Egypt will abandon their territorial claims once serious negotiations are under way.

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Initially, a major purpose of Libya's diplomatic initiatives had been to drum up support for an Arab summit conference at which Sadat would be forced to explain his intentions to the conclave and in turn would be held answerable to those who take a hard line toward a settlement with the Israelis. Now, Qadhafi refuses to attend a summit meeting set for Algiers on November 26, apparently because he no longer believes he can use it to hurt Sadat.

Qadhafi began a four-day visit to Yugoslavia yesterday, the first such trip he has made since taking power in 1969. His decision to travel at this critical point in Middle East politics may be designed to show his contempt for peace efforts now under way.

Press reports from Baghdad predict that Egypt's President Sadat will fly to Belgrade to explain his acceptance of the cease-fire to Qadhafi.

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GREECE

The government, fearing new demonstrations, placed military forces on full alert yesterday as a "precautionary measure." After a quiet Saturday night, army and police forces skirmished yesterday with small groups of demonstrators in Athens throughout the day. The French news agency reports that this morning, pamphlets calling for a workers' uprising against the government were thrown into Athens streets.

The toll of the weekend disturbances included nine dead, 350 injured, and more than 1,200 arrested.

In a radiobroadcast on Saturday, President Papadopoulos blamed the demonstrations on politicians and "anarchic elements" trying to frustrate his efforts to return Greece to political "normality." He said his previous policy of "self-restraint" had been misunderstood, and he urged those politicians who had backed the demonstrators to reconsider.

Papadopoulos' plea was addressed to politicians such as former prime minister Kanellopoulos, who had issued a statement hailing the demonstrators as "showing the way to democracy." So far, none of the politicians supporting the demonstrators has been arrested. Feeling against the politicians is reportedly running high in the government, and Papadopoulos' former military colleagues, who in recent months had been largely alienated by his policies, now appear to be supporting him.

It is not yet clear who was directing the anti-regime activity inside the Polytechnic Institute, the center of the demonstrations until it was cleared by the army on Saturday morning. Followers of exiled leftist Andreas Papandreou were much in evidence as agitators and participants, however.

The timing of the demonstrations was unfortunate for the government's efforts to "politicalize" the regime. The politicians had been largely adopting a wait-and-see attitude toward Prime Minister Markezinis' invitation to participate in elections; many were tempted to take part if the Prime Minister carried through on his pledge of "impeccable" election procedures. Because of the disturbances, Markezinis has indefinitely postponed announcement of further "politicalization" measures.

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Many politicians may now interpret the weekend's events as "proof" that nothing has changed and the authoritarian character of the government remains. At the same time, the politicians must share some blame for the events because of their encouragement of the students.

Nevertheless, Papadopoulos has reaffirmed his intention to continue with the political normalization program, toward which some army officers have been cool. The US Embassy believes the weekend's events demonstrate that the army remains a key factor in the Greek political scene, and that if the situation should worsen, a return to a military regime cannot be excluded.

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THAILAND

Thai protesters throughout the country are continuing to voice their grievances in the wake of last month's upheaval in Bangkok. According to the US Embassy, demonstrators in Thailand's hinterland have been agitating against provincial officials, school administrators, and the high price of rice. In Bangkok, students have assembled before the embassy of Nationalist China, presumably to protest the continued presence in Taiwan of former strongman Praphat.

Thus far local authorities have had little trouble coping with the demonstrations, but central government officials are worried. Prime Minister Sanya, Army Commander in Chief General Krit, and the director of the National Police appeared on television last week to appeal for calm. Krit reportedly has recommended to Sanya that measures planned to grant amnesty to the October rioters include a call for an end to demonstrations.

Although Krit has complained privately about continued student agitation, press attacks on the armed forces, and public harassment of uniformed personnel, he apparently remains committed to a return to civilian government. Last week's television appeal included a pledge by Krit to keep the army out of politics. At the moment, he is working closely with the King and the Prime Minister on a plan to replace the military-dominated National Assembly with a new civilian body.

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WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Representatives of 23 Latin American and Caribbean nations met in Bogota from November 14-16 to discuss the course of US - Latin American relations. They have drawn up a broad agenda for a meeting with Secretary Kissinger early next year in Mexico. The conference, attended by 16 foreign ministers, fulfilled the desires of its principal organizers--the foreign ministers of Mexico and Colombia--to avoid major contentious issues and to contribute to a constructive dialogue with the Secretary.

Among the topics the Latins want to discuss with the US are: greater cooperation in the hemisphere for development; the international monetary system; the role of multinational corporations; the transfer of technology; and the revitalization of the inter-American system. Panama won support for a resolution that calls on the US to conclude a Canal treaty that will satisfy Panama's "just aspirations," but efforts by other countries to introduce controversial issues were defeated.

Delegates were said to be divided in their views about Cuba--the only Latin American country not invited to Bogota. The possibility of reintegrating the Castro government into regional organizations will be raised with Secretary Kissinger, and a majority of the participants probably will seek a definition of US policy toward Havana.

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